

The Difference Between Workforce Planning and Succession Planning

*Article taken from the New York State website on workforce planning.
<http://www.goer.state.ny.us/workforce/resources/differencebetweenworkforce.htm>*

This is an effort to distinguish between Workforce and Succession Planning.

Workforce planning has the goal of having the right people, across the organization, in the right place at the right time. Succession Planning is an important subset of workforce planning. Its goal is the same but its focus is specifically on having the right leadership in place at every level of the organization.

Both workforce and succession planning are critical to the health of any organization. Workforce planning involves addressing staffing needs by:

- Linking human resources planning with strategic planning-assuring that human resources are aligned with the agency/division's strategic goals and priorities;
- Understanding how agency/division functions will change over time;
- Understanding how changes in functions will affect job requirements;
- Understanding how the workforce is changing in terms of demographics, skills, interests and performance;
- Understanding how well the current workforce is prepared for future job requirements and identifying potential gaps;
- Developing strategies, including recruitment, retention, training, etc, to address staffing needs based on the gaps.

Succession planning is a subset of workforce planning in which critical positions are targeted and staff prepared to qualify for the targeted positions. The process mirrors to a large extent the workforce planning process and all of the above must also be considered when planning for succession to leadership and other critical positions. To assure consistent succession, agencies/divisions must:

- Assess the potential for vacancies in leadership and other key positions;
- Assess the readiness of current staff to assume these positions;
- Develop strategies to address these needs based on the gaps including mentoring, formal training in leadership and supervisory skills, working with staff to navigate the Civil Service System to assure appropriate promotional pools, developing strategies to retain current and potential staff, etc.

At any given time, an agency should be doing both workforce and succession planning. Focusing on agency and organizational unit levels to create training and development programs will ensure truly qualified candidate fields for their titles and occupations. Agencies will also be focused on hard-to-fill titles involving external recruitment

